

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Excellence in Student Achievement Committee of the Whole**  
**September 12, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Cynthia Elliott; District Staff: Brandon Keaveny, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Shirley Green,; Carleen Meers, Djinga St. Louis; Kimberly McKinsey-Mabry (Parent Representative); Jacqueline Morgan (Board Staff)

Absent: Commissioner Willa Powell

Commissioner White called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**I. Minutes**

**Motion** to approve the June minutes was made by Commissioner White; the motion was tabled until the next meeting due to the absence of Commissioner Powell, as Commissioner Elliott refrained from voting because she was not present at the June meeting. **Motion** to approve the July minutes was made by Commissioner White, seconded by Commissioner Elliott.

**II. African/African-American Studies Department Activities Update**

Djinga St. Louis, Director of the African/African-American Studies Department, showed a DVD highlighting students from various schools stating what career path they were interested in following after college or job training as adults. At the end of the video teachers stated why they are urban teachers to show how they connected with their students. The video was created by Ms. St. Louis and Tom Moughan from the district's Communications Department. Commissioner White asked where the DVD can be viewed; Ms. St. Louis responded that the DVD will be able to be viewed on the District's website.

Ms. St. Louis also noted the following activities in the Department of African/African-American Studies:

- Creation of a web page for the department that is updated monthly

- Creation of a Cultural Response Team to review the Rochester Curriculum
- Developed PD for teaching and support staff on culturally relevant teaching
- Visitation of 37 elementary schools (as a result of these visits 25 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes were introduced to Jamaican culture through a book written by Jamaican Olympic Bobsledder, Devon Harris)
- Location of legislation which mandates, that the state or school district must African American Studies History a part of the curriculum
- Creation of a video presentation for teachers to view on Superintendents conference day entitled “Student Voices” (the Board Members will receive a copy of the video)

This list is a few of the activities that have taken place in this department since Ms. Louis has taken the role of director. In addition to the listed items, Ms. St. Louis partnered with Visual and Performing Arts Department to provide transportation and tickets for 25 ELA teachers to bring over 900 students to see a play entitled *Black Girls’ Anthem* at the Nazareth Arts Center.

### III. **Special Education Update (Continued from the July Meeting)**

The committee continued its discussion on Special Education from the July meeting regarding the review process that is used to determine whether or not a student is in need of specialized services. The committee received further data regarding students who are receiving specialized services and are on target for graduation in 2012. 230 students have been identified for graduation. The Department of Specialized Services will be monitoring these students to ensure their graduation and will provide a copy of the plans to the committee.

Mrs. Green noted that 32% of the district’s student population is African-American males; and that 7.5% of this population is students with disabilities.

Commissioner Elliott stated that she didn’t think that the noted percentages are correct. Brandon Keaveny then stated that the 7.5% is in relation to males who are African-American and are students with disabilities as related to the entire district. When you look at only students with disabilities (17.6%), of those students 42% are African-

American males. This indicates that 42% of students with disabilities are African-American males.

Commissioner White asked with percentage of the district is white males; Mrs. Green stated that 5.3% of the district is comprised of white males. Commissioner White then asked what percentage of white males are students with disabilities; Mr. Keaveny stated that 9% of that population are students with disabilities.

**Action Items:**

Ms. St. Louis will provide copies of the DVD that was shown highlighting students and teachers from various schools for the full Board.

Ms. St. Louis will provide thematic format document of African-American experience to the Board that was utilized for PD with teachers.

Ms. St. Louis will provide disc from Florida for steps the Board would have to take for legislation to have African-American Studies be a part of the Rochester Curriculum.

Mrs. Green will provide copies of the plans for the 230 students with disabilities who are on track for graduation in June 2012.

Ms. Morgan will invite Carleen Meers to present NYU data on risk factors regarding disabilities for African-American, Hispanic and white males.

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott at 7:32 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner White.

The next meeting of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee will be held on **Monday, October 17, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.**